In the Claims

No amendments have been made to the claims. The claims are presented herein below, for the convenience of the Examiner.

1. (Previously Presented) A telecommunications system for provisioning an inter-provider internet protocol (IP) service, comprising:

a first network managed by a first service provider, said first network having a plurality of resources;

a second network managed by a second service provider, said second network having a plurality of resources, said second network being operable to receive a request for the inter-provider IP service;

means for anonymously advertising availability information indicating real-time availability of the plurality of resources of said first network and real-time availability of the plurality of resources of said second network between said first network and said second network;

means for determining additional resources corresponding to a portion of the plurality of resources provided by the first network are needed for the inter-provider IP service based on the request and the availability information; and

means for automatically provisioning the inter-provider IP service between the first network and the second network using the additional resources.

2. (Canceled).

3. (Original) The telecommunications system of Claim 1, further comprising:

a unified and integrated switch connected to said first network and said second network, said unified and integrated switch having common resources, a first portion of the common resources being dedicated to the first service provider and being capable of being configured by the first service provider, a second portion of the common resources being dedicated to the second service provider and being capable of being configured by the second service provider.

4. (Original) The telecommunications system of Claim 3, wherein said unified and integrated switch includes a first logical communications node associated with the first service provider and capable of being dynamically configured in a customized manner by the first service provider and a second logical communications node associated with the second service provider and capable of being dynamically configured in a customized manner by the second service provider.

5. (Original) The telecommunications system of Claim 3, wherein said unified and integrated switch is within said first network, the first service provider being a wholesale service provider, the second service provider being a retail service provider.

6. (Previously Presented) The telecommunications system of Claim 1, further comprising:

means for calculating cost information in real-time for use of the additional resources for the inter-provider IP service prior to provisioning the inter-provider IP service; and

means for comparing the cost information to cost requirement information associated with the request to determine whether to utilize the additional resources for the inter-provider IP service.

7. (Original) The telecommunications system of Claim 6, further comprising:

means for creating an electronic contract between the first service provider and the second service provider using the cost information.

8. (Previously Presented) The telecommunications system of Claim 6, wherein said means for calculating comprises:

a software engine configured to receive the request for the inter-provider IP service, calculate pricing scenarios using the request, obtain real-time resource information including the availability information, calculate real-time prices for each of the pricing scenarios using the real-time resource information and customize the cost information based on knowledge of the identities of the first service provider and the second service provider, the request and the real-time prices.

9. (Original) The telecommunications system of Claim 8, further comprising:

a database for storing the real-time resource information.

10. (Original) The telecommunications system of Claim 9, wherein said means for provisioning includes an operational support system connected to said software engine and said database, said operational support system being further configured to manage the inter-provider IP service in real-time.

11. (Previously Presented) A method for provisioning an inter-provider internet protocol (IP) service across at least two service providers, comprising:

anonymously advertising availability information indicating real-time availability of resources within respective networks managed by the at least two service providers between the at least two service providers;

receiving a request for the inter-provider IP service at one of the service providers;

determining additional resources corresponding to a portion of the plurality of resources provided by the other one of the service providers are needed for the inter-provider IP service based on the request and the real-time availability information; and

automatically provisioning the inter-provider IP service between the respective networks of the at least two service providers using the additional resources.

12. (Canceled).

13. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 11, further comprising:

providing a unified and integrated switch for the at least two service providers, the unified and integrated switch having common resources;

configuring a first portion of the common resources dedicated to a first service provider of the at least two service providers by the first service provider; and

configuring a second portion of the common resources dedicated to a second service provider of the at least two service providers by the second service provider.

14. (Original) The method of Claim 13, further comprising:

dynamically configuring in a customized manner a first logical communications node by the first service provider; and

dynamically configuring in a customized manner a second logical communications node by the second service provider.

15. (Original) The method of Claim 13, wherein the first service provider is a wholesale service provider and the second service provider is a retail service provider.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 11, further comprising:

calculating cost information in real-time for use of the additional resources for the inter-provider IP service prior to provisioning the inter-provider IP service; and

comparing the cost information to cost requirement information associated with the request to determine whether to utilize the additional resources for the inter-provider IP service.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of Clam 16, further comprising:

creating an electronic contract between the at least two service providers using the cost information.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 16, wherein said calculating comprises:

calculating pricing scenarios using the request;

obtaining real-time resource information including the availability information;

calculating real-time prices for each of the pricing scenarios using the real-time resource information; and

customizing the cost information based on knowledge of the identities of the at least two service providers, the request and the real-time prices.

19. (Original) The method of Claim 18, further comprising:

collecting the real-time resource information; and

storing the real-time resource information.

20. (Original) The method of Claim 19, wherein said provisioning further comprising:

managing the inter-provider IP service in real-time.

21. (Original) The method of Claim 11, wherein said provisioning further comprising:

incorporating network infrastructure and resources in said provisioning;

incorporating business relations among the at least two service providers dynamically and in real-time in said provisioning, wherein the business relations include at least contracts and prices; and

incorporating business objectives in said provisioning, wherein the business objectives include at least one of financial ratios, service volume and profitability.

22. (Previously Presented) The telecommunications system of Claim 4, wherein said unified and integrated switch is operable to add a portion of said common resources dedicated to the first logical communications node to the second logical communications node to provision the inter-provider IP service.

23. (Previously Presented) The telecommunications system of Claim 1, wherein said resources include network resources, hardware resources and software resources.